

## United States Senate

May 16, 2017

# 410

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12 St. SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

As you build the Federal Communications Commission's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee (BDAC), I wanted to make you aware of an individual I would recommend to serve on the BDAC's Streamlining Federal Siting working group. His name is Neil Schlenker.

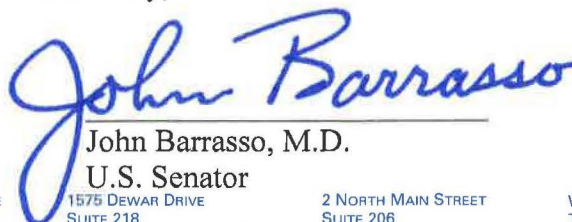
Neil is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Tri County Telephone Association, Inc. (TCT) in Wyoming. TCT provides Internet, telephone, and television services to residential and business customers in northwestern Wyoming, southwestern Montana, and on the Crow Indian Reservation. TCT covers 5,000 square miles in places where the distance between customers exceeds 20 miles. As Chairman of TCT, Neil appreciates the unique challenges of building broadband networks in rural areas.

Despite the difficulty of serving customers in lightly populated areas, Neil understands the importance of having access to high-speed internet service. Recognizing the ever-increasing broadband needs of schools, healthcare providers, businesses and residential customers, Neil is continually working on ways to expand and increase broadband access in new and creative ways. TCT has overcome rural barriers for more than twenty years, including using terrestrial wireless broadband service where landline facilities are not feasible. TCT provides its customers with some of the best broadband available in Wyoming.

As a telecommunications provider, Neil has first-hand experience working through permitting processes across multiple agencies. Serving customers in Wyoming, Montana, and on the Crow Indian Reservation, Neil has a unique perspective and experience with several permitting processes. His knowledge and background would make him an asset to the Streamlining Federal Siting working group.

The BDAC's mission is to "provide advice and recommendations to the Commission on how to accelerate the deployment of high-speed Internet access." I have every confidence that Neil possesses the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to serve on the BDAC. As a lifelong resident of the Big Horn Basin and Chairman of TCT, Neil would bring the perspective of a rural broadband consumer and telecommunications provider to the BDAC. I encourage you to give his application to serve on the Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee serious consideration.

Sincerely,



John Barrasso, M.D.  
U.S. Senator



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 20, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso  
United States Senate  
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Barrasso:

Thank you for your letter supporting the appointment of Mr. Neil Schlenker, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Tri County Telephone Association, to serve on the Commission's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee's (BDAC) Streamlining Federal Siting working group.

Last September, I proposed what I called a Digital Empowerment Agenda—a blueprint of policies that would accelerate the deployment of high-speed Internet access, or broadband, in communities across the country, including rural America. The BDAC is intended to provide an effective means for stakeholders to exchange ideas and develop recommendations to the Commission on broadband deployment. Its mission will be to identify regulatory barriers to infrastructure investment and to make recommendations on reducing and/or removing them, which will in turn enhance the Commission's ability to carry out its statutory responsibility to encourage broadband deployment to all Americans.

We were fortunate to have an excellent and deep pool of applicants to serve on the BDAC. The Commission received over 380 applications, resulting in the selection of 29 members for the BDAC, which met for the first time on April 21, 2017. The selection of members for the Streamlining Federal Siting working group is currently in progress, and we anticipate making a final announcement in the near future. We will certainly consider your recommendation and Mr. Schlenker's impressive resume as the Commission reviews the nominations for this BDAC working group and any future working groups.

I appreciate your taking the time to communicate your recommendation to me. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ajit V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai